

ANIMAL HUSBANDRY FACT SHEET 15—1972

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The farrowing period and the first few days of lactation represent one of the most critical phases in swine production. If proper management procedures are not followed during this phase, unnecessary baby pig losses and other complications that will reduce profits can occur. The management and feeding pointers discussed below can help you avoid some of these problems.

MANAGEMENT POINTERS

Prior to Farrowing

Worm sows or gilts about 3-4 weeks before farrowing. This is especially important if animals have been maintained on pasture during gestation. Use worming products according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Also treat sows and gilts for external parasites at this time.

Follow your veterinarian's recommendation in herds where erysipelas is a problem. He may recommend that sows and gilts be vaccinated 3-4 weeks prior to farrowing in addition to the vaccination administered prior to breeding.

Thoroughly clean farrowing facilities by scrubbing them with hot water mixed with lye. There is no substitute for good sanitation. A steam cleaner or a high pressure water sprayer will do an excellent job of loosening and removing hard-to-get materials.

Allow cleaned and disinfected farrowing facilities to stand unoccupied for at least 2 weeks between farrowings.

Prepare and place footbaths of disinfectant at all doorways of the farrowing house and use them. Restrict the entry of visitors and other possible carriers of disease such as pets, rats, and mice.

Composition of diets fed during farrowing and during lactation

Ingredient*	Period when fed	
	Farrowing	Lactation
Ground yellow corn†	65.0	78.5
Soybean meal, solvent, 48.5 percent	10.0	18.5
Tankage, digester, 60 percent	3.0	-----
Linseed meal	5.0	-----
Dehydrated alfalfa meal	5.0	-----
Wheat bran	10.0	-----
Dicalcium phosphate	0.5	1.3
Ground limestone	1.0	1.2
Salt‡	0.5	0.5
Vitamin premix**	+	+
Percentage protein, calculated	16.0	16.0
Percentage calcium, calculated	0.84	0.80
Percentage phosphorus, calculated	0.59	0.55

*Percentage of air-dry diet.

†Could be partially or entirely replaced by ground barley or milo.

‡Should be a trace mineralized salt that contains at least .008 percent iodine. Be certain to provide 70-100 p.p.m. supplemental zinc in the complete diet.

**Should provide the following per ton of diet: vitamin A, 6,000,000 I.U.; vitamin D, 400,000 I.U.; vitamin E (alpha-tocopherol), 40 gm.; riboflavin, 4 gm.; niacin, 22 gm.; d-calcium pantothenate, 16 gm.; choline chloride, 400 gm.; vitamin B12, 12 mg.

Feeding and Managing Sows at Farrowing and During Lactation

Put sows and gilts in the farrowing pen or stall 3-4 days before farrowing to acquaint them with the surroundings. This is especially necessary for first litter gilts. You should therefore know the approximate breeding date for each animal (see Animal Husbandry Fact Sheet 13).

Scrub sows and gilts thoroughly with soap and water, giving special attention to the underline, before putting them into the farrowing quarters. Don't forget to rinse them. A washing of this nature will remove worm eggs as well as dirt and manure from the sow's body.

Bed farrowing quarters with clean straw or wood shavings. Don't use too much. Clean pens regularly. (In slotted floor farrowing facilities, of course, bedding is not used.)

Remember that the optimum temperature for sows is 55° - 65° F. Provide good ventilation, prevent drafts, and keep the floors dry.

At Farrowing

Be present at farrowing. If you use farrowing stalls and retain sows in the herd that "pig" easily, it is less imperative that you be on hand 100 percent of the time.

Contact a veterinarian at once in cases of difficult or prolonged labor.

If your farrowing stalls are set up over completely slotted floors, cover the floor (along the sides) within each stall for the first few days after parturition (farrowing). You can use such materials as plywood, rubber mats, or old carpet. Such covering will protect the feet and legs of the very young pig and prevent drafts that may come up from the pit or area below. In systems where farrowing stalls are set up over solid concrete floors, cover the area under the sow with wooden planks to make her more comfortable.



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FEEDING POINTERS

During Farrowing

Remember that farrowing is a period of considerable stress for the sow. Adequate **nutrition** must be provided to facilitate repair of reproductive organs and for preparation for **lactation**. During this period, formulate the diet to be moderately laxative to avoid problems associated with constipation of sows and gilts. Including such feedstuffs as wheat bran and linseed meal in the diet fed at farrowing time should alleviate any such problems. An example of such a diet is shown in the accompanying table.

If possible, don't feed animals for 12 hours prior to farrowing. After a sow has farrowed, allow another 12 hours to pass before feeding her.

Following parturition, feed sows at a rate of 2 pounds per head daily and increase this amount by 1-2 pounds per day until they are on full feed. Continue feeding the same diet as fed at farrowing for at least 3 days after parturition.

During Lactation

Feed sows a high energy diet to support milk production. A sow may secrete 10-20 pounds of milk daily, which increases her energy needs considerably over her needs during gestation. A sow may secrete 1 pound or more of protein in her milk daily, as well as large amounts of calcium and phosphorus. To

meet these demands, feed sows a simple, but adequate, high-energy diet containing adequate protein (see the accompanying table).

Start feeding the high energy diet about 3-5 days after parturition. Increase the intake gradually until the sow is on full feed. Usually, it takes about 5-7 days from farrowing before the milk flow and needs of the pigs warrant full feeding. If feed intake is increased too rapidly, pigs may scour. If this occurs, reduce the **sow's feed intake**. If the condition persists, check with a veterinarian.

Follow this guideline for maximum or full feeding during lactation: provide 4-5 pounds (depending on body weight, with heavier sows receiving up to 5 pounds) plus 0.8 pound for each pig nursed.

Provide an unlimited supply of fresh water at all times.

Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Roland H. Abraham, Director of Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.